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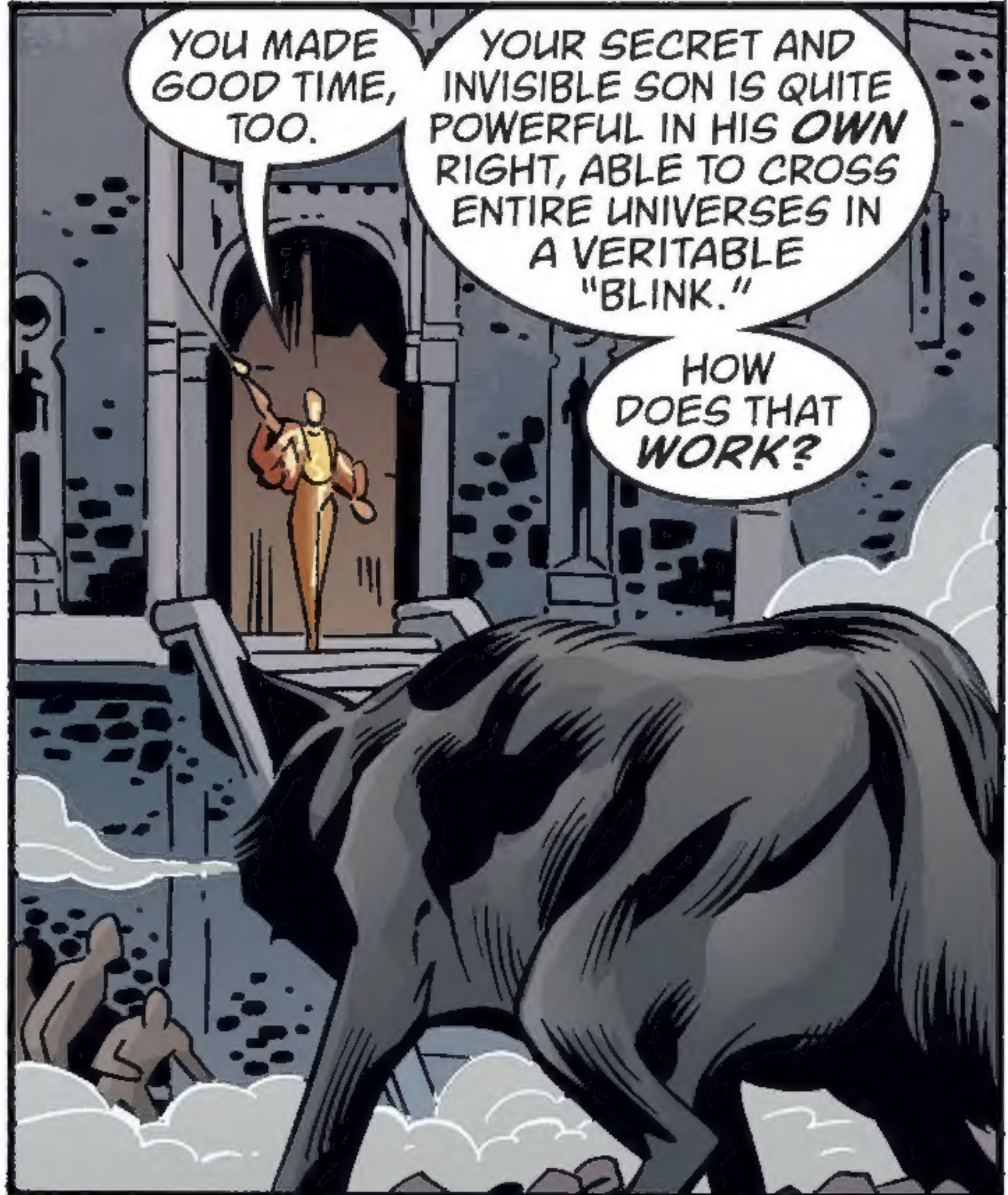


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suggested for
mature readers
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MEANWHILE, IN THE BIGGEST COURTYARD OF FABLETOWN RESTORED...

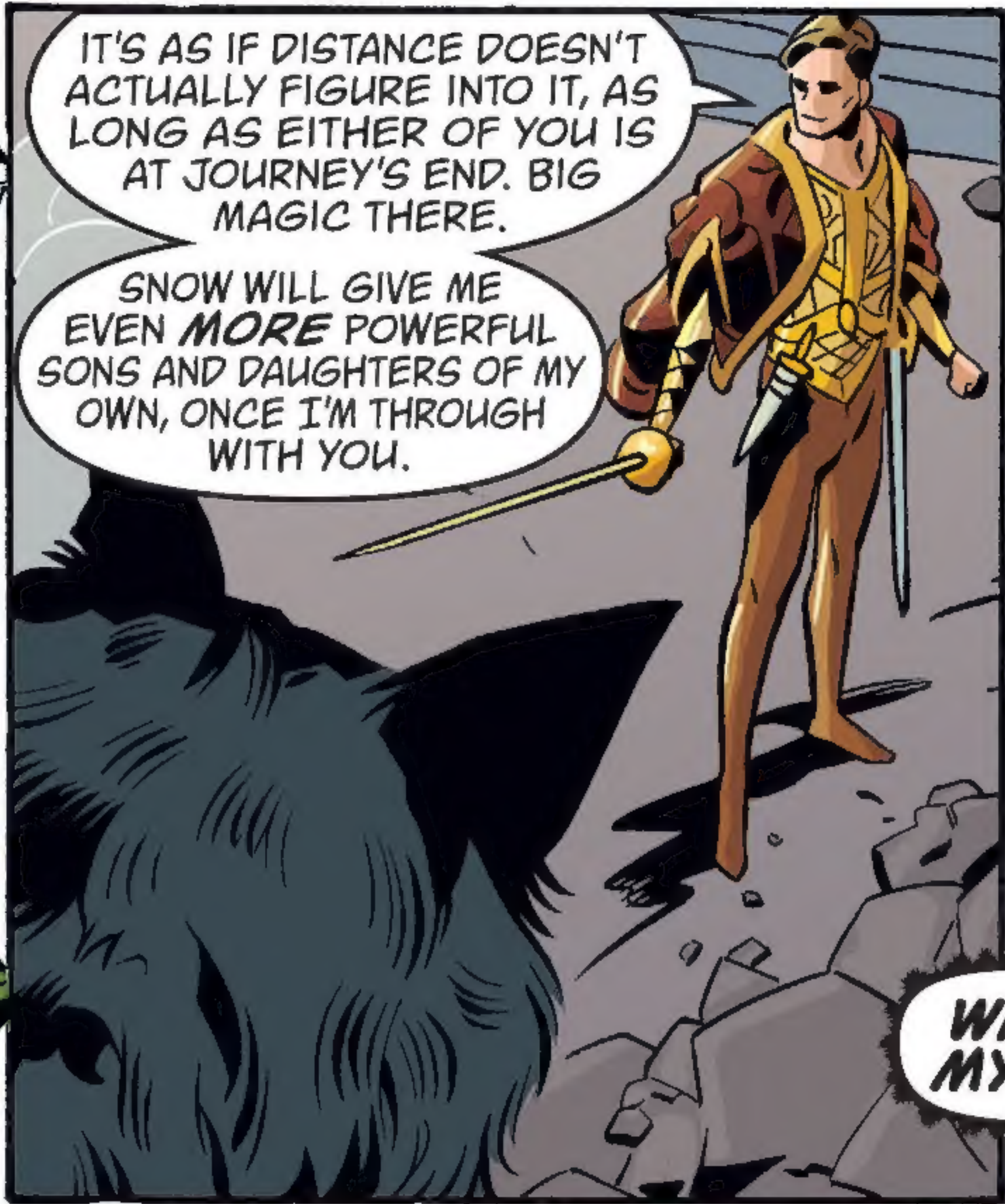
AT LAST!
THE ANIMAL BRIDEGROOM IS HOME!



YOU MADE GOOD TIME, TOO.

YOUR SECRET AND INVISIBLE SON IS QUITE POWERFUL IN HIS OWN RIGHT, ABLE TO CROSS ENTIRE UNIVERSES IN A VERITABLE "BLINK."

HOW DOES THAT WORK?



IT'S AS IF DISTANCE DOESN'T ACTUALLY FIGURE INTO IT, AS LONG AS EITHER OF YOU IS AT JOURNEY'S END. BIG MAGIC THERE.

SNOW WILL GIVE ME EVEN MORE POWERFUL SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF MY OWN, ONCE I'M THROUGH WITH YOU.



WHERE'S MY WIFE?

Through a Glass Darkly Chapter Four of Snow White

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 ❄️ Steve Leialoha: inks (2-3, 6-7, 10-11, 14-15, 18-19) ❄️
 ❄️ Andrew Pepoy: inks (1, 4-5, 8-9, 12-13, 16-17, 20) ❄️
 Lee Loughridge: colors ❄️ ❄️ Gregory Lockard: assoc. ed.
 ❄️ Todd Klein: letters ❄️ ❄️ ❄️ Shelly Bond: editor ❄️

My father, the Big Bad Wolf of nightmare and legend, fought Prince Brandish in a personal duel for the safety and honor of my mother, Snow White. Written like that, it sounds almost romantic—the stuff of high fantasy.

The truth, of course, wasn't so pretty. The actual fight isn't as easy to put down in words. I struggle to write the cold facts of the event even now, at so many years' remove.

SETTLE DOWN, ANIMAL. WE'LL GET TO THE HUFFING AND PUFFING, RENDING AND STABBING. ALL IN GOOD TIME.

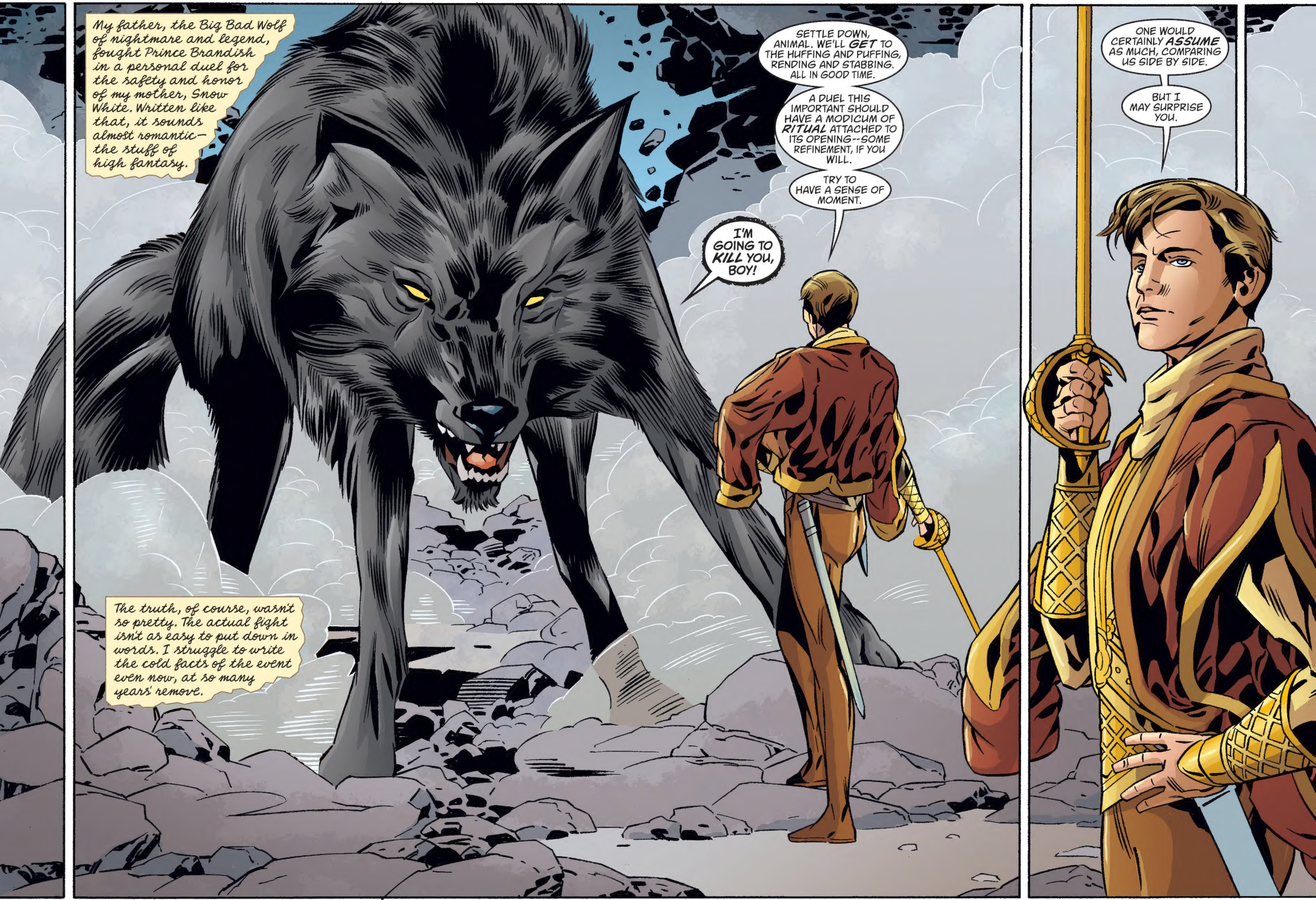
A DUEL THIS IMPORTANT SHOULD HAVE A MODICUM OF RITUAL ATTACHED TO ITS OPENING--SOME REFINEMENT, IF YOU WILL.

TRY TO HAVE A SENSE OF MOMENT.

I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, BOY!

ONE WOULD CERTAINLY ASSUME AS MUCH, COMPARING US SIDE BY SIDE.

BUT I MAY SURPRISE YOU.



Many aspects of that fateful day were taken straight out of the old stories. The beautiful woman locked away in a tower by a monster.



BIGBY!
DON'T KILL HIM!

Until the handsome prince came to save her.



WHY NOT?
A VERMIN'S PURPOSE IS TO DIE.

Except it was the handsome prince who locked her away in this case, and the monster who came to save her.



BUT I MADE A SACRED VOW!

YOU'RE HOLDING YOURSELF TO THAT RIDICULOUS MARRIAGE PROMISE?



SEE? I KNEW SHE'D COME AROUND.



OF COURSE NOT. THAT'S HORSESHIT.

I MADE A SACRED VOW TO BE THE ONE TO END HIS MISERABLE LIFE, AND I MEAN TO KEEP IT!

LEAVE HIM TO ME!



SORRY.

CAN'T DO IT.

YOU AREN'T FORSWORN IF EVENTS INTERVENE BEFORE YOU CAN CARRY OUT YOUR OATH.



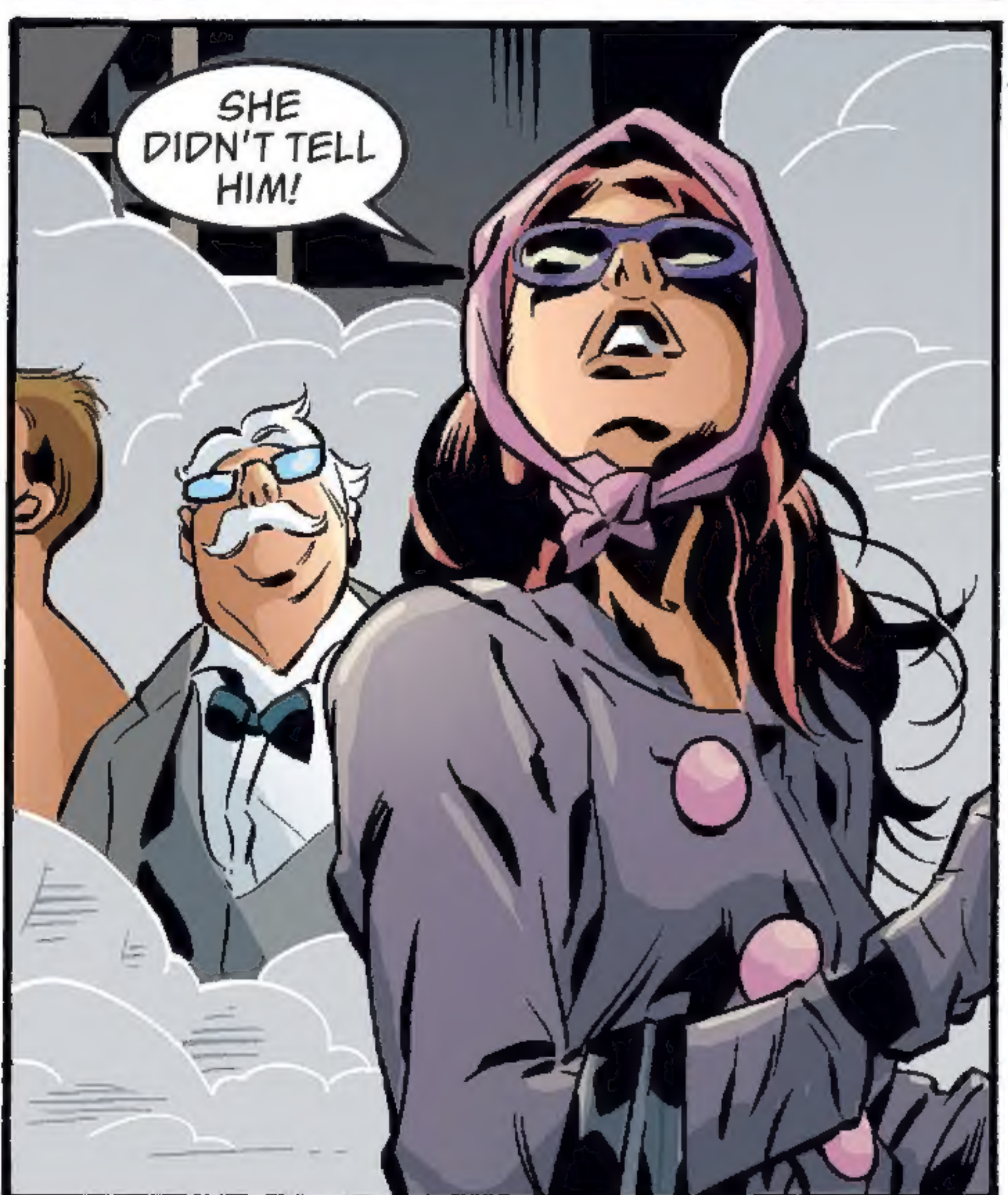
HE DIES NOW.

WELL, SOMEONE DIES NOW. I'LL GRANT THAT MUCH.



DAMMIT, BIGBY! YOU MAKE ME SO MAD SOMETIMES!

GO ON, THEN! HAVE YOUR WAY! BUT MAKE IT QUICK!



SHE DIDN'T TELL HIM!

My mother didn't tell my dad that any harm he did to Brandish would also fall on her.

Aunt Rose said she could get stubbornly brave at times.

My mother described it otherwise, as the sort of pig-headed stupidity that made her and dad perfect for each other.

WOOOOSH!

YOW!

IMPRESSIVE, WOLF!

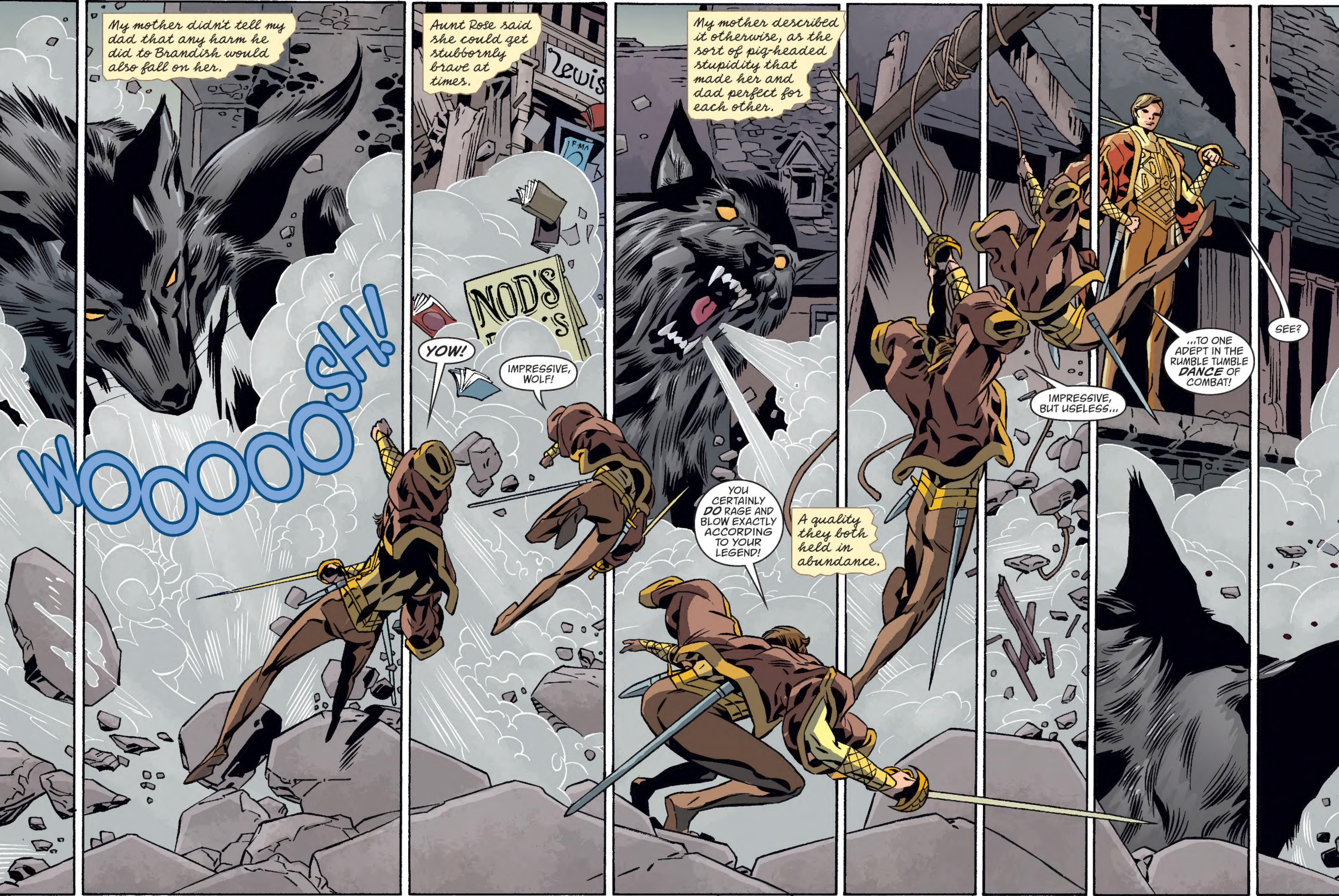
YOU CERTAINLY DO RAGE AND BLOW EXACTLY ACCORDING TO YOUR LEGEND!

A quality they both held in abundance.

IMPRESSIVE, BUT USELESS...

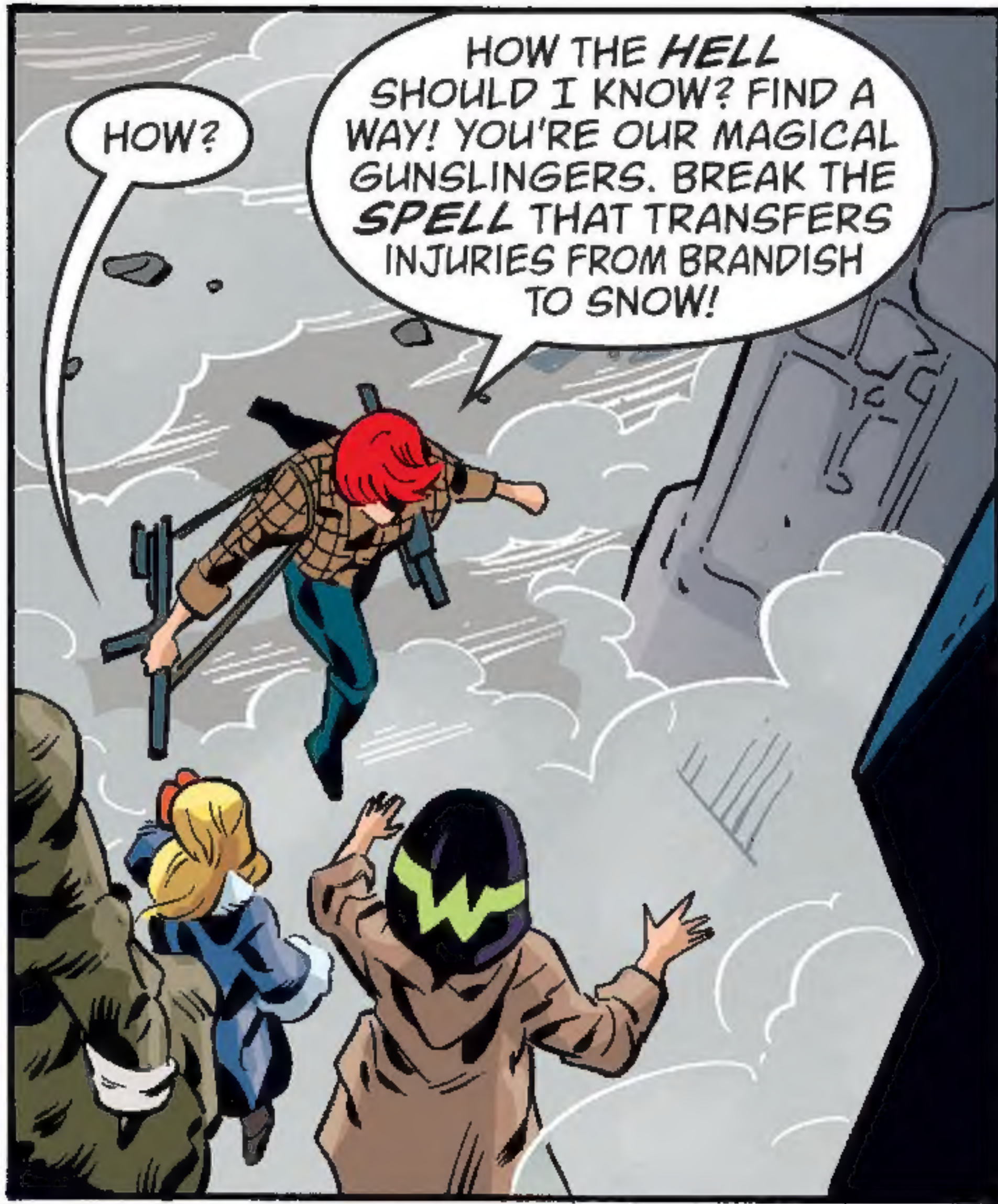
...TO ONE ADEPT IN THE RUMBLE TUMBLE DANCE OF COMBAT!

SEE?



The winds that hurled Brandish around the courtyard did the same to my mother, confined in her tower room.





HOW?

HOW THE *HELL* SHOULD I KNOW? FIND A WAY! YOU'RE OUR MAGICAL GUNSLINGERS. BREAK THE *SPELL* THAT TRANSFERS INJURIES FROM BRANDISH TO SNOW!



GIVEN TIME I THINK I COULD DO IT. EVEN NOW I'M *EXAMINING* THE SPELL'S WARP AND WEAVE, WHICH IS REMARKABLE.

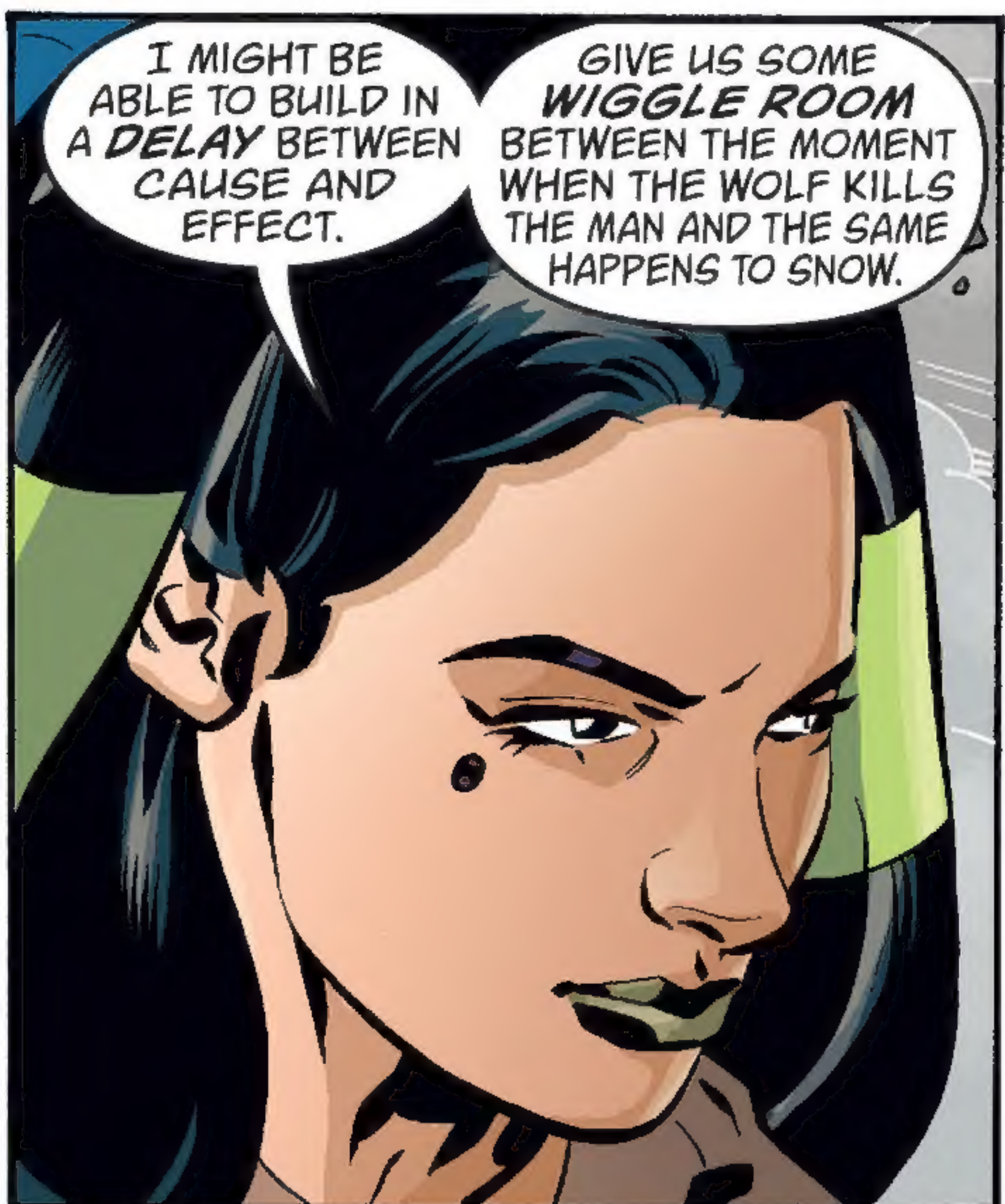
I THINK I COULD UNRAVEL IT IN A FEW DAYS.



WE DON'T *HAVE* A FEW DAYS. IN A MINUTE OR TWO BIGBY IS GOING TO *CHOMP* THE PIG PRINCE AND THEN SNOW'S GONE, TOO!

I HAVE AN IDEA. WHAT IF WE DON'T TRY TO BREAK THE SPELL, BUT *ADD* TO IT INSTEAD?

WHY?



I MIGHT BE ABLE TO BUILD IN A *DELAY* BETWEEN CAUSE AND EFFECT.

GIVE US SOME *WIGGLE ROOM* BETWEEN THE MOMENT WHEN THE WOLF KILLS THE MAN AND THE SAME HAPPENS TO SNOW.



YES!
WHATEVER THAT IS, DO *THAT*!



TOO SMALL TO PIN DOWN?

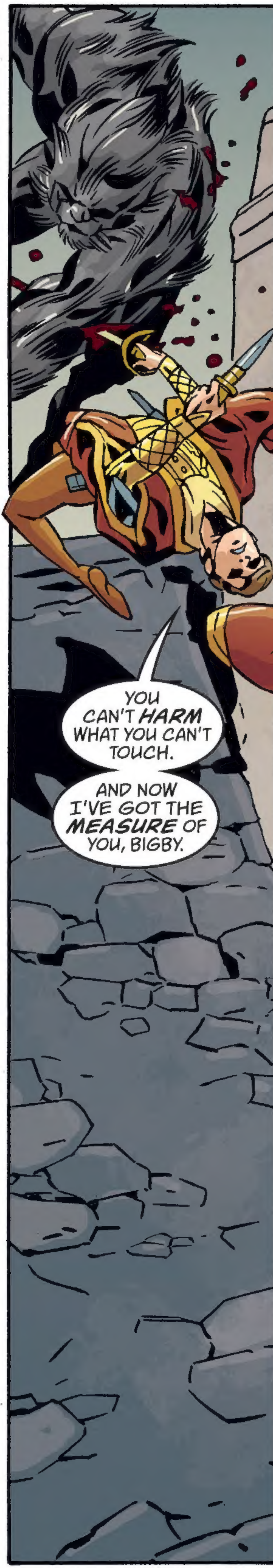


FINE!
I CAN BE SMALLER TOO!



AND JUST AS TOUGH!

DOESN'T HELP THOUGH, DOES IT?



YOU CAN'T HARM WHAT YOU CAN'T TOUCH.
AND NOW I'VE GOT THE MEASURE OF YOU, BIGBY.

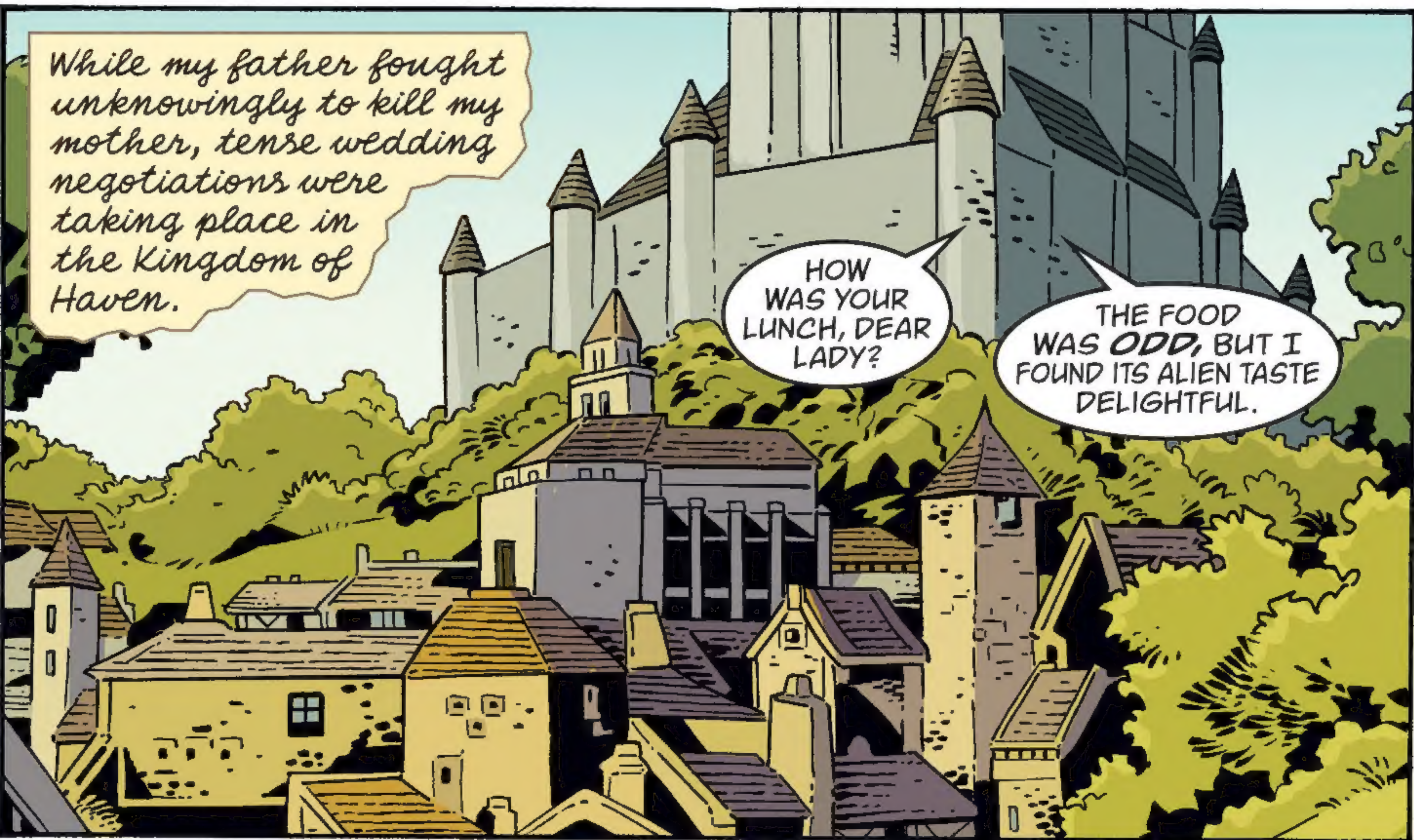


YOU'LL NEVER LAY A PAW ON ME BUT THAT I ALLOW IT.



AND WHOEVER SHOULD I ALLOW IT?





While my father fought unknowingly to kill my mother, tense wedding negotiations were taking place in the Kingdom of Haven.

HOW WAS YOUR LUNCH, DEAR LADY?

THE FOOD WAS *ODD*, BUT I FOUND ITS ALIEN TASTE DELIGHTFUL.



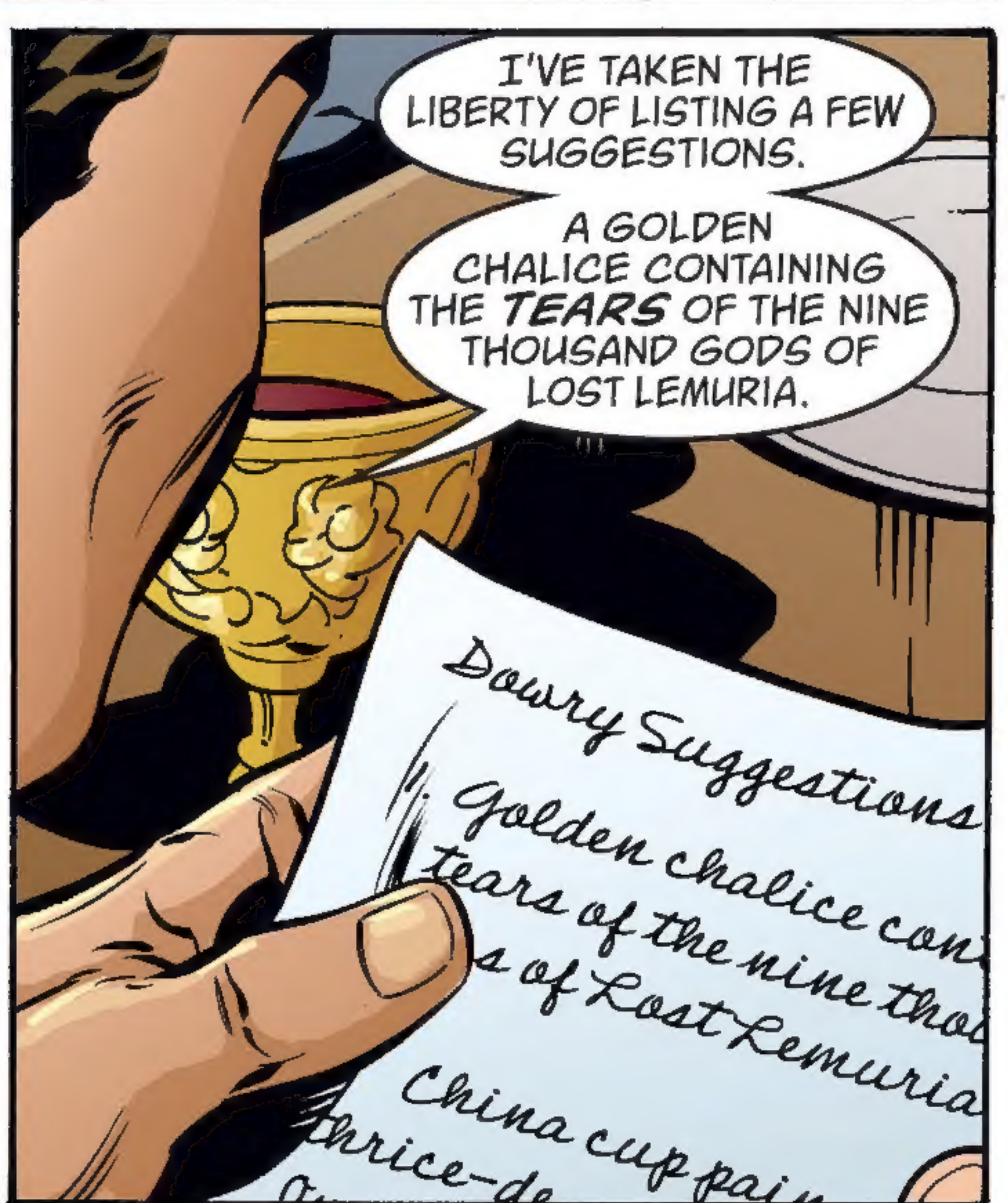
THEY'RE CALLED *CHILIDOGS*, A SPECIAL CUISINE TREASURED BY OUR AUGUST KING, AND ONLY OFFERED TO HIS MOST FAVORED GUESTS.

ARE YOU READY TO RESUME, OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO *REST* FIRST? MY PRINCIPAL AND I ARE IN NO HURRY. BEST TO DO IT RIGHT, RATHER THAN FAST, NO?

WE CAN CONTINUE. WE WERE DISCUSSING THE DOWRY.



YES, AND I'M AFRAID I CAN'T COMPROMISE ON THIS POINT. YOUR PRINCIPAL'S DOWRY TO GEPPETTO *MUST* INCLUDE AT LEAST THREE MAGICAL TREASURES BEYOND PRICE.



I'VE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF LISTING A FEW SUGGESTIONS.

A GOLDEN CHALICE CONTAINING THE *TEARS* OF THE NINE THOUSAND GODS OF LOST LEMURIA.

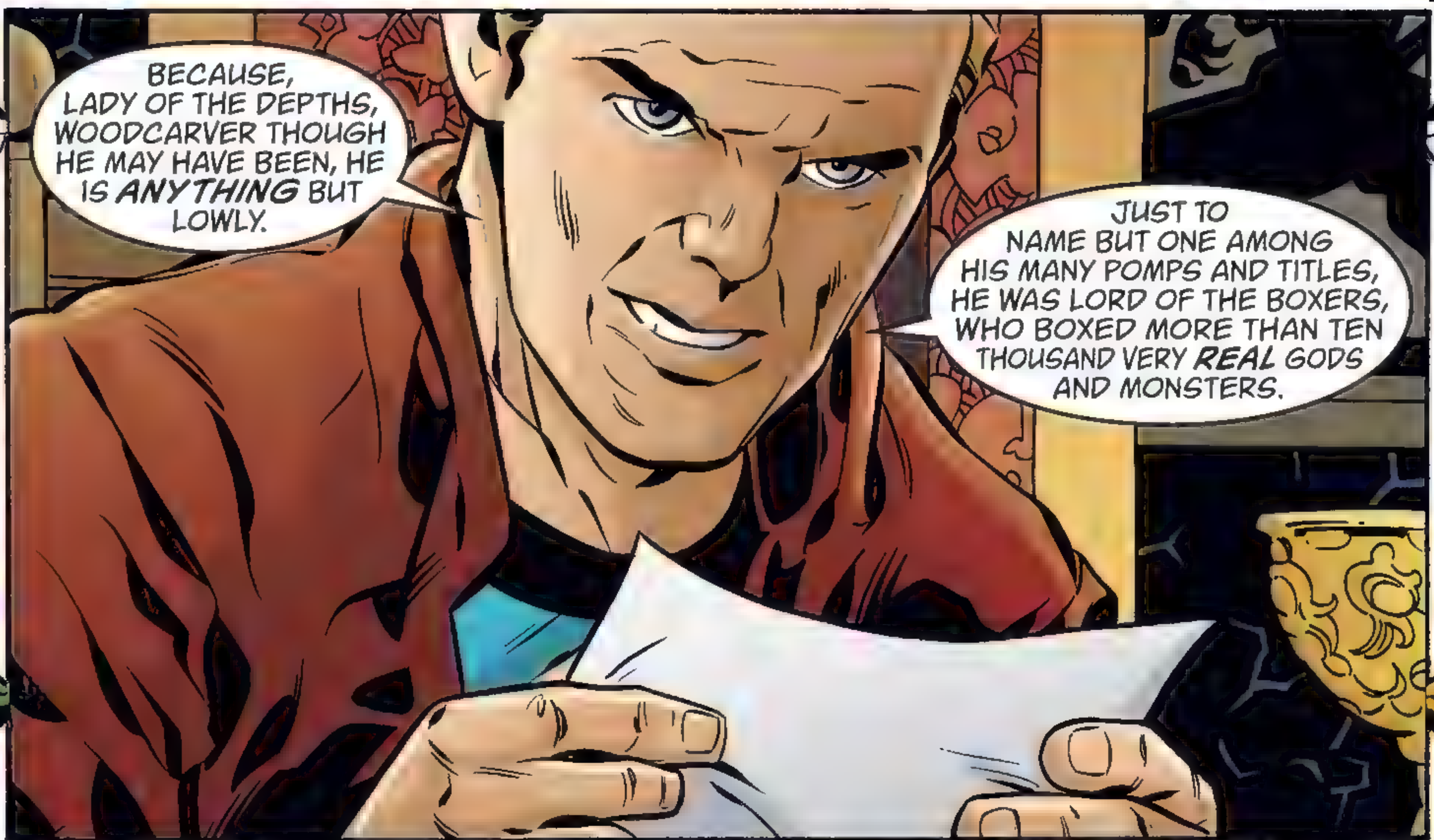
Dowry Suggestions
Golden chalice containing tears of the nine thousand gods of Lost Lemuria
China cup pair
Trice-de



A CHINA CUP HAND-PAINTED BY THE THRICE-DEPARTED SHADE OF HONOROMI ONO ISU.

A COLLECTION OF--

FORGIVE MY INTERRUPTION, LORD SHERIFF, BUT WHY IS A LOWLY WOODCARVER DESERVING OF SUCH IMPOSSIBLE RICHES?



BECAUSE, LADY OF THE DEPTHS, WOODCARVER THOUGH HE MAY HAVE BEEN, HE IS ANYTHING BUT LOWLY.

JUST TO NAME BUT ONE AMONG HIS MANY POMPS AND TITLES, HE WAS LORD OF THE BOXERS, WHO BOXED MORE THAN TEN THOUSAND VERY REAL GODS AND MONSTERS.

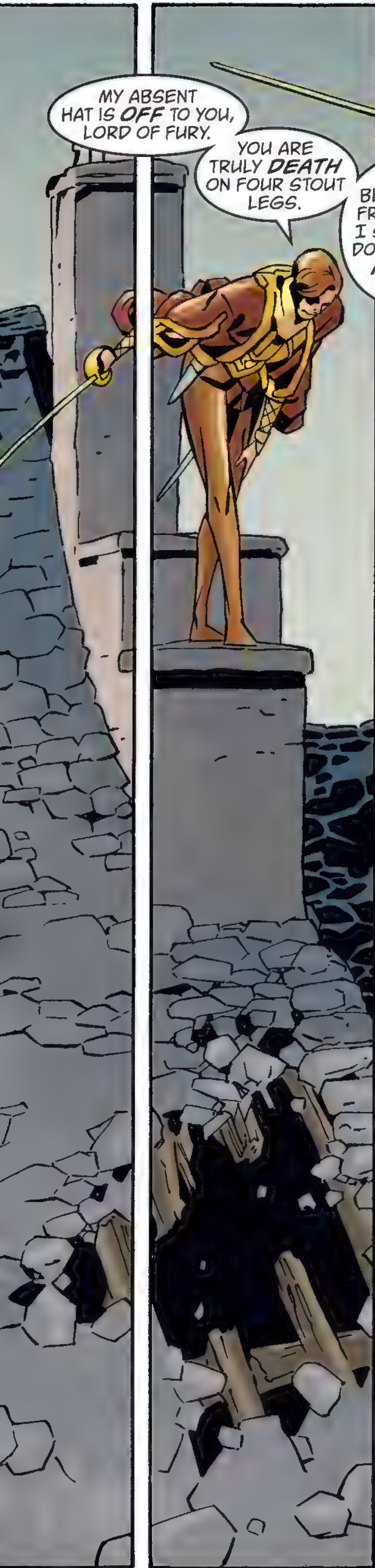


TELL ME, LAKE, HOW CLOSE DID THEY COME TO CATCHING YOU?

I'LL CONFESS, I HAD TO GO DEEP TO ESCAPE THEM.



AND THERE WE ARE. GREATNESS MUST BE HONORED, NO MATTER HOW DARK AND TERRIBLE THE SOURCE OF IT.



MY ABSENT HAT IS OFF TO YOU, LORD OF FURY.

YOU ARE TRULY *DEATH* ON FOUR STOUT LEGS.

ONE GOOD BLOW OR BITE FROM YOU AND I SEE THAT I'M DOOMED BEYOND *HOPE* OF SURVIVAL.



SO, I'D BEST MAKE SURE YOU NEVER TOUCH ME.

MEANTIME, SEE HOW I PRICK AWAY AT YOU, HERE AND THERE.

LET THE MAGIC OF MY BLADE *INVADE* YOU BY *INCREMENTS*.



STAND *STILL*, BOUNCING BUG!

AH, BUT THAT'S THE *ART* OF IT, DON'T YOU SEE?



IT'S THE NEVER-CHANGING STORY OF *MAN*: A CONTEST OF SUPERIOR INTELLIGENCE, DEXTERITY, AND RAW TALENT HONED BY CENTURIES OF TRAINING, OVER *BESTIAL* RAGE.

AND I'LL WIN.



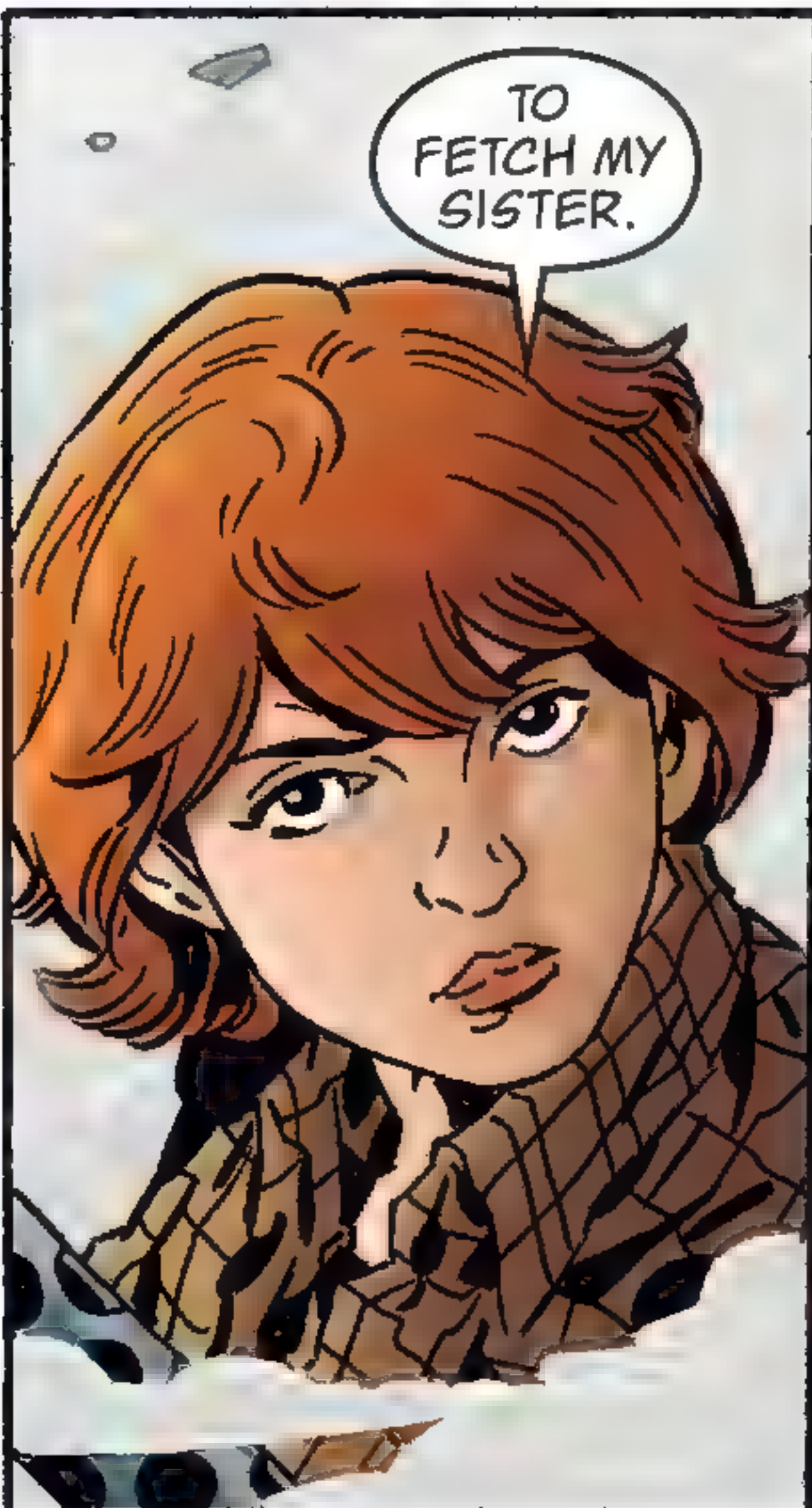
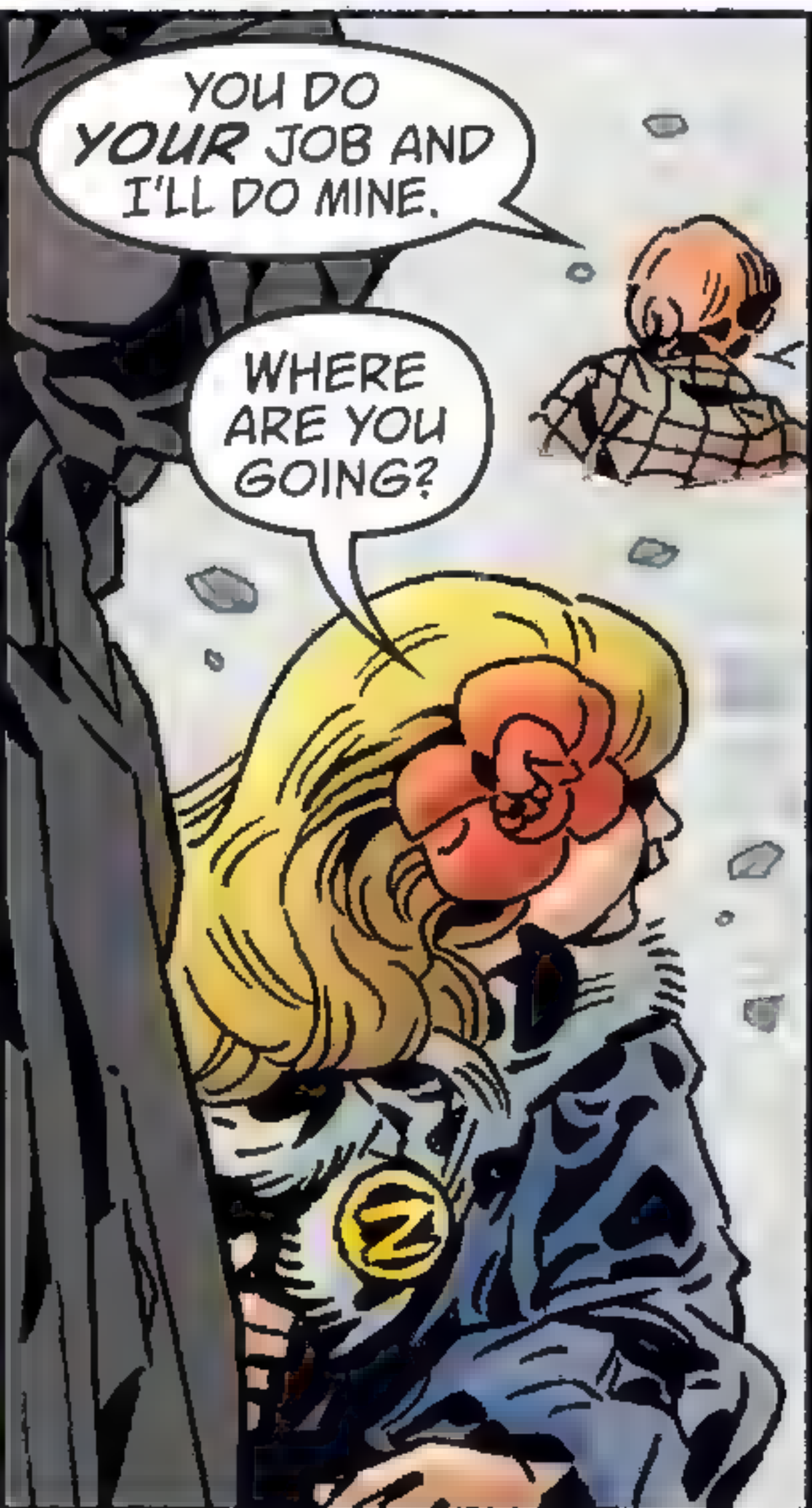
FOR CIVILIZED *MAN* WILL EVER TRIUMPH OVER THE MOST *BRITISH* FORCES OF NATURE. THAT'S ALL OF HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL.



DEATH OF A THOUSAND SMALL CUTS.

AN OUTCOME NEVER IN DOUBT.







NOW WHERE DID THEY DUMP THE...?



BINGO!



SNOW!



READY TO MAKE YOUR BIG ESCAPE?

ABOUT TIME YOU THOUGHT OF THIS. SO MUCH FOR TWINS READING EACH OTHER'S MINDS.



I GOT THERE EVENTUALLY. ALWAYS WAS A SLOW READER.

HOLY SHIT ON A BAGEL! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR ARM?



LONG STORY. I'LL TELL YOU ON THE WAY.



YOU'RE SLOWING DOWN, WOLF LORD.

MOVING IN FITS AND STARTS.

DO YOU FEEL IT?

YOUR BONES KNITTING?

YOUR SINEWS LOSING THEIR FLEX AND PUSH?



THE MAGIC OF BLADE AVICTRIX IS TAKING EFFECT.

THE SWORD THAT IS ACTUALLY A HUNDRED MAGIC WEAPONS CONQUERED AND ABSORBED OVER THE AGES INTO THE ONE WHICH RULES THEM ALL!



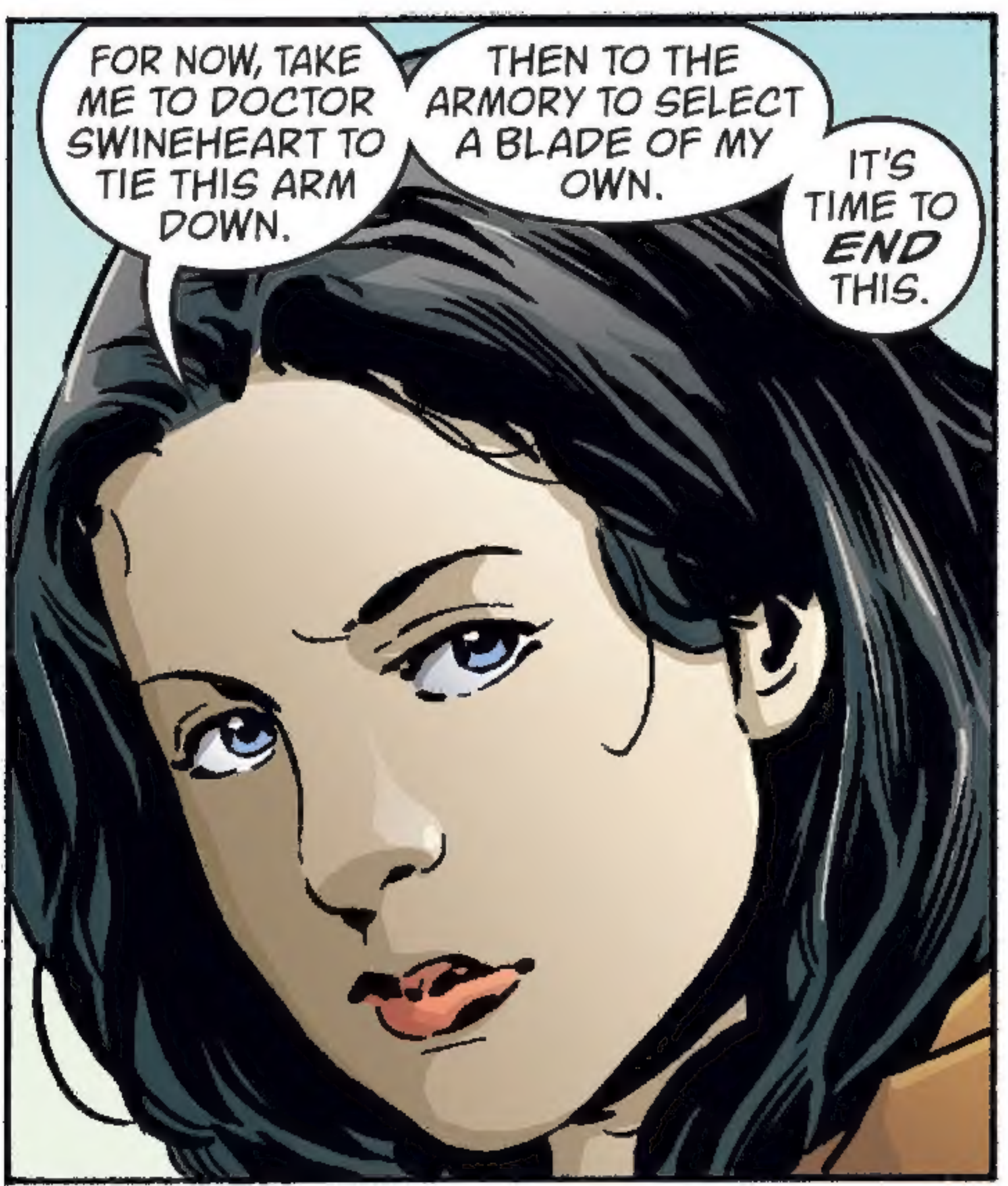
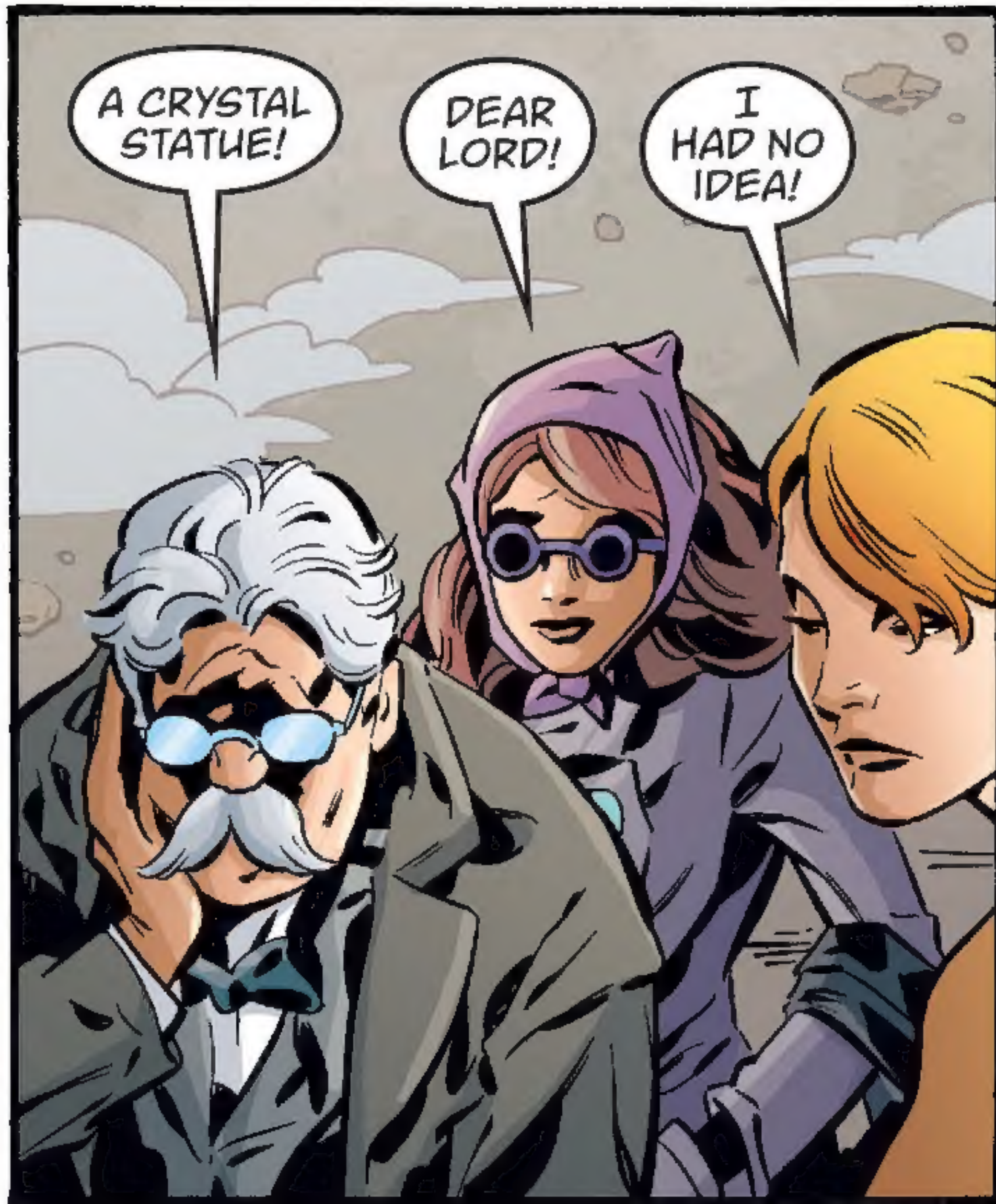
THIS IS PERHAPS MY FAVORITE ITERATION OF ALL. IT'S CALLED MARMIMAGO VASCULARIUS.

THE STATUE-MAKER.

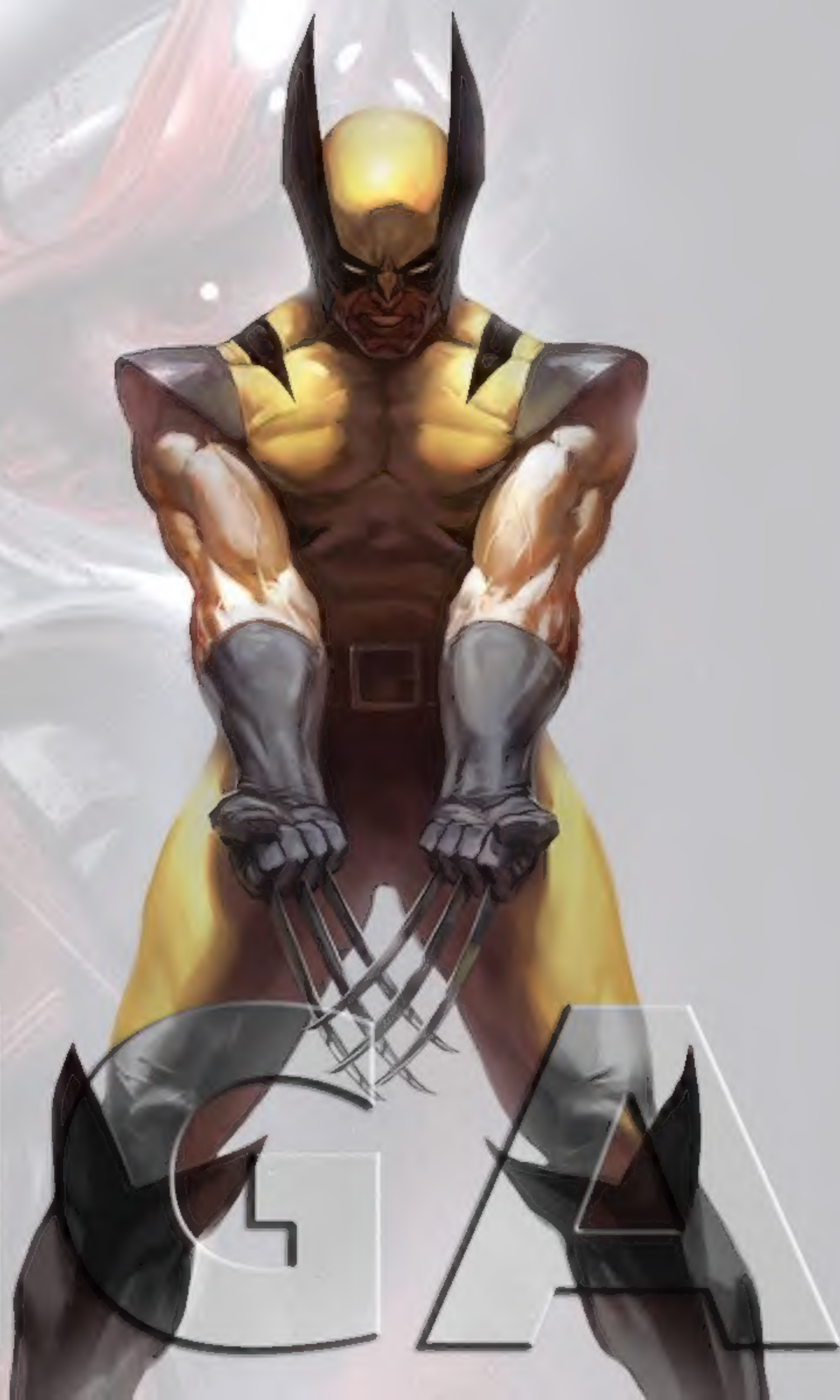


I USE IT ONLY RARELY, WHEN I WANT TO DECORATE MY PALACE WITH INTERESTING ART.

MEMENTOS OF MY FAVORITE BATTLES.



NEXT: THE BIG BREAKUP!



NATHAN